

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Kretschmer Manufacturing Company,
Factory and Warehouse
220 East Ninth Street
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-AL

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-AL-

**PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver Colorado 80225

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,

Kretschmer Manufacturing Company. Factory and Warehouse

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Site Location: 220 East Ninth Street
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 8.17
Cadastral grid : SE1/4 SE1/4 S24 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque North Iowa 7.5'
UTM coordinates: 15.692070.4708030
Lot dimensions : 55'x 77': .10 acre
Lot description: East 55' of City Lot 399
and East 55' of North 1/2
of City Lot 400.

Present Owner: Kretschmer-Tredway Company
Present Usage: warehouse
Present Condition : good

Overall dimensions: 80'x 100'; 3 stories

Orientation: east

Architectural Plan type : 3-story rectangular, open-space warehouse.

Description : Foundation: coursed ashlar limestone perimeter walls with
tooled stone watertable.

Structure : brick masonry bearing walls and concrete flat-
slab frame with steel jacket-formed mushroom
columns.

Ext. walls: common red brick laid in common bond.

Roofs : flat composition roof with brick parapet walls;
corrugated steel-sheathed canopy cantilevered
from wall by steel brackets over front loading
platform.

Chimneys : corbeled brick interior chimneys (2 visible
from street).

Openings : painted wood 2/2 double-hung windows with loose
lintels and concrete lug sills placed singly on
front, side and rear; simply framed entrance
and garage doors on front, side and rear; full-
width concrete loading platform on front.

Details : moderately corbeled brick courses on front
and side parapets; brick walls recessed
slightly to form simple brick pilasters;
KRETSCHMER MANUFACTURING Co. in metal letters
applied to front parapet; HK PLUMBING HEATING
PUMPS PIPES ETC. in metal letters applied to
front and side walls of elevator tower; terra
cotta coping tiles on parapets.

Construction Date : 1912

Architecture Style: Twentieth Century Functional

Physical History : After a fire destroyed its factory in July 1911, the Kretschmer Manufacturing Company constructed this three-story brick factory on the corner of Ninth and Washington streets. Reportedly costing \$40,000, the structure featured fireproof construction with reinforced concrete columns and floor slabs and masonry exterior bearing walls. The building was organized with the business offices and the fabricating plant on the first floor and storage on the two upper floors. A freight elevator was placed on the front wall, its machinery loft housed in a tower on the front of the building upon which the company's trademark HK logotype was mounted. The Kretschmer Manufacturing Company continued operations in this building for almost two decades. In 1929 Frank joined with Harry E. Tredway, president of the Ernsdorff Iron Company to form the Kretschmer-Tredway Company. This restructured firm has occupied the building to the present. The structure itself has remained essentially unaltered, other than the construction of a three-story brick/frame side addition in 1950.

Significance: Herbert C. Kretschmer was born in Dubuque on August 2, 1866; his brother, Fredrick N. Kretschmer, was also born in the city, on October 19, 1869. Herbert began his working career at age fifteen as a plumber's assistant for Morrison Brothers and then worked as a shipping clerk, and later as a traveling salesman, for the A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing Company, Dubuque's mammoth plumbing fixture manufacturer. Fredrick, meanwhile began his employ as a clerk in a Dubuque bank, and was eventually elected to the position of county treasurer. In February 1907 the two brothers joined with a man named Morrison (first name unknown; perhaps one of the Morrison Brothers, plumbers) to incorporate the Morrison and Kretschmer Manufacturing Company. With capitalization of \$40,000 the firm produced and marketed plumbing fixtures and supplies, most notably the "double-flush" water closet and bath and basin traps. The association with Morrison lasted only a short time, however, and by 1910 the firm was known simply as the Kretschmer Manufacturing Company. "They started out in a small way," Dubuque historian Franklin Oldt stated in 1911, "but by shrewd business management prospered until today their establishment is regarded as one of the solid and substantial houses in the city." By that time the company employed forty men and occupied the immense four-story, 15,000 square-foot facility of the defunct Pitts-Thompson Foundry on the corner of Washington and Ninth streets. On July 31, 1911, the factory was destroyed by a block-wide fire, and within a year the brothers had built this three-story building as a replacement.

In reality, the Kretschmer Company was one of the smaller manufacturers in Dubuque's huge iron fabricating industry. Dwarfed by such nationally known firms as the A.Y. McDonald Manufacturing Company, the Iowa Iron Works and the Novelty Iron Works, Kretschmer's production was relatively minor. With its

flat-slab concrete construction and steel jacket-formed mushroom columns, the 1912 factory reflected the current fireproof technology for industrial and commercial structures. It was built at a time in which concrete frame construction for buildings was beginning to gain rapidly in popularity as an innovative application of a developing technology: one of Dubuque's earliest truly fireproof buildings.

References:

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